

Message Text

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14

ACTION AF-05

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FM AMEMBASSY LOME

TO USDOC WASHDC

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 7139

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E.O. 11652C N/A

TAGS: BEXP, TO

SUBJ: AUTOMOTIVE VEHICLES -- INVESTMENT/EXPORT OPPORTUNITY

1. EMBASSY WOULD LIKE ACTION ADDRESSEES TO SEE IF ANY US MOTOR VEHICLE MANUFACTURER (OR WEST AFRICAN REP OF SAME) CAN BE INDUCED TO INVESTIGATE POSSIBILITY OF EXPORTING TO TOGO. HAVE VERY PRELIMINARY ESTIMATE OF US COMPACT CAR MARKET HERE OF 100 - 200 UNITS PER YEAR, AFTER ONE OR TWO YEAR START-UP.

2. REQUEST AND ESTIMATE COMES FROM DIRECTOR OF TOGO'S CENTER FOR PROMOTION OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES, HABEL AKPAMA. HE ENVISAGES STIMULATING CREATION OF AFRICAN PRIVATE ENTERPRISE, WITH SOME AMERICAN INVESTMENT, EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING, TO IMPORT, SELL AND SERVICE US-MADE VEHICLES IN TOGO (LEFT-HAND DRIVE COUNTRY). EMBASSY AWARE OF NEED FOR MARKET SURVEY AND WILLING UNDERTAKE SAME ON REQUEST, WITH INSTRUCTIONS. NEVERTHELESS, WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE VISIT BY REGIONAL REP OF ANY AMERICAN CAR MAKER WHO WANTS TO HAVE A LOOK.

3. ASIDE FROM SURVEY, TWO POSITIVE FACTORS TO BE NOTED:

A. AKPAMA HAS JUST RETURNED FROM HIGHLY SATISFACTORY 30-DAY VISIT TO US AS IV GRANTEE. HE IS FULL OF ENTHUSIASM FOR POSSIBILITIES OF INCREASING TRADE WITH US AND IS GIVING FIRST

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PRIORITY TO MARKETING OF US PASSENGER AND OTHER VEHICLES.

HIS CENTER ENJOYS GOT SUPPORT AND IS ABLY ASSISTED BY UNIDO
EXPERT TRAINED AT HARVARD BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION SCHOOL, WHO
SHARES HIS BELIEF IN THIS PROJECT.

B. USAID HAS LENT TOGOLESE DEVELOPMENT BANK (VIA COUNCIL OF
ENTENTE FUND) DOLS 1 MILLION FOR PROMOTION OF SMALL
AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES.

4. AT PRESENT US AUTO INDUSTRY VIRTUALLY UNREPRESENTED HERE,
PARIS-BASED SCOA (SOCIETE COMMERCIALE DE L'QUEST AFRICAN)
"REPRESENTS" CHRYSLER, BUT CONCENTRATES ALL EFFORTS ON ITS
PEUGEOT AND VOLKSWAGEN FRANCHISES; ONE SUSPECTS SCOA
PROBABLY HOLDS ONTO CHRYSLER JUST TO KEEP IT OUT OF HERE.
POSSIBILITY MAY THEREFORE EXIST TO CREATE JOINT TOGOLESE-
US COMPANY, PERHAPS WITH SMALL US EQUITY, BUT MORE
IMPORTANTLY, US EXPERTISE (WHICH COULD BE EXERCISED THROUGH
MANAGEMENT CONTRACT).

5. FOR COMMERCE AND ABIDJAN, PLEASE INFORM INTERNATIONAL
EXECUTIVE SERVICE CORPS (IESC) AFRICA DIRECTOR AUBREY AND
IESC WEST AFRICA REGIONAL REP UMPHREY, RESPECTIVELY; AUBREY
AND UMPHREY VISITED LOME EARLY DECEMBER AND TALKED WITH LOCAL
BUSINESS COMMUNITY, UNDER AKPAMA'S SPONSORSHIP.
DECONTROL UPON RECEIPT.
DICKINSON

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